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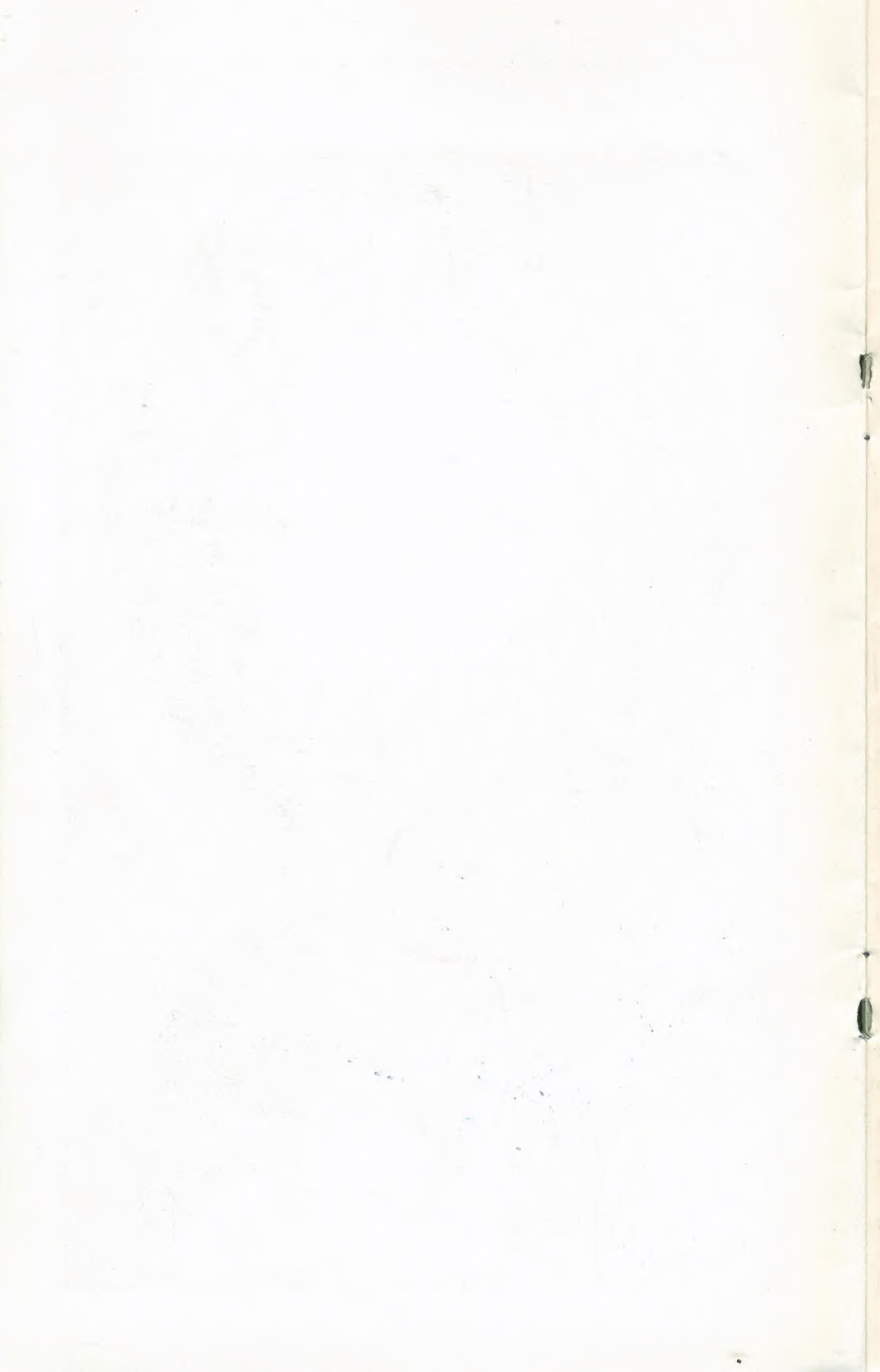
Rosalind Plowright
SOPRANO

Geoffrey Parsons
PIANO



NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

Saturday 2nd March at 8 p.m.





Rosalind Plowright

The year 1984 started well for Rosalind Plowright. In Rome she recorded for Deutsche Grammophon the coveted role of Leonora in the long awaited Giulini recording of *Il Trovatore*, singing opposite Plácido Domingo. This has always been a very significant opera for Rosalind Plowright since she first sang the role of Leonora in Sofia after winning the first women's prize in the Seventh International Singing Competition.

In 1979 she won the Society of West End Theatres' Award (SWET) for her portrayal of Miss Jessel in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and she made her debut abroad in the title role of *Manon Lescaut* at Torre del Lago in 1980 — the year of the *Trovatore* Leonora in Bulgaria, where she also sang the role of Abigaille in *Nabucco*.

She then joined the Bern Opera for a year in the 1980-81 season under Gustav Kuhn, where she sang the title roles in Gluck's *Alceste* and Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*. This led to invitations to sing Ariadne in the Frankfurt and Hamburg opera houses, also the title role in *Aida* and Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Frankfurt, and Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* at the Munich Opera Festival.

In 1982 Rosalind Plowright made her American debut in *Un Ballo in Maschera* with José Carreras at the 125th Anniversary Concert of the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti. In San Diego that same year she sang the title role in Chabrier's *Gwendoline* and Medora in Verdi's *Il Corsaro*.

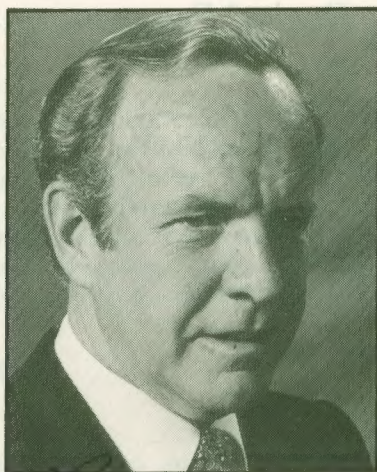
In London she created something of a sensation with her portrayal of Desdemona in the English National Opera's new production of *Otello* in 1981 and also won great acclaim for her portrayal of Elizabeth I in the ENO's production of Donizetti's *Mary Stuart* the following year. Both these operas were recorded by EMI, and her video recordings include *Mary Stuart* and *Suor Angelica*. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* in 1983 and has just enjoyed a personal success as Maddalena in the ROH's new production of *Andrea Chénier*, with José Carreras in the title role.

During the last few months she has concentrated on Verdi. Her portrayal of Elena in the English National Opera's new production of *The Sicilian Vespers* was a triumph.

Concert appearances include performances of Strauss' *Four Last Songs* in France and Verdi's *Requiem* in Cincinnati, Bonn and at the Proms in London. She will shortly be appearing in *Otello* in Hamburg and in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Manon Lescaut* at Frankfurt.

Rosalind Plowright studied with Frederic Cox in Manchester before being awarded both a Peter Stuyvesant Foundation and a Peter Moores Scholarship. She studies today with Erich Vietheer, Roberto Benaglio and Charles Hamilton.

Her first international opera recording of Leonora in *Il Trovatore* with Plácido Domingo was singled out by all the leading British publications and Radio 3's Rodney Milnes described it as the "best version on record with Rosalind Plowright 'quite marvellous'."



Geoffrey Parsons

Geoffrey Parsons was born in Sydney, Australia and decided at the age of seventeen to become an accompanist. In this capacity he made his first tours of Australia in 1948 and 1949 and in 1950 he came to England as accompanist to Peter Dawson.

After tours for the Arts Council, he played for Gerhard Hüsch and subsequently worked with him as his permanent accompanist. Since then he has become established as one of the great accompanists of our time and has given concerts in forty-one countries and on all six continents, including nineteen return visits to his native Australia, with such singers as Victoria de los Angeles, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Dame Janet Baker, Birgit Nilsson, Rita Streich, Hans Hotter and Nicolai Gedda, as well as with instrumentalists such as Milstein, Tortelier, Ida Haendel and Wanda Wilkomirska.

Geoffrey Parsons has made tours of the United States of America with Victoria de los Angeles, Grace Bumbry and Ileana Cotrubas. He appears regularly at the major European Festivals — Salzburg, Aix-en-Provence, Munich, Vienna, Edinburgh, etc. — with Hermann Prey, Christa Ludwig, Jessye Norman, Gwyneth Jones, Ileana Cotrubas, Margaret Price, Lucia Popp and Peter Schreier.

Through his many broadcasts and recordings he is known to an even wider public. His most recent recordings have been with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Victoria de los Angeles, Dame Janet Baker, Lucia Popp, Hugues Cuenod, Ida Haendel and Jessye Norman.

In 1982 he inaugurated the first International Recital Series at the Barbican Centre, London, under the title *Geoffrey Parsons and Friends*, accompanying Dame Janet Baker, Felicity Lott, Victoria de los Angeles, Thomas Allen, Gundula Janowitz, Margaret Price, Christa Ludwig and Nicolai Gedda. He also gave a further Series in 1983 which included Peter Schreier, Ileana Cotrubas, Hermann Prey, Leontyne Price, Lucia Popp and Teresa Berganza.

In 1974 Geoffrey Parsons was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and in the Queen's Jubilee Honours in 1977 he was made an OBE for his services to the performing arts.

Recital Programme

L'Amor mio
La Gondoliera

Donizetti

Storiella D'Amore
Sole e Amore

Puccini

Romanza

Ponchielli

Interval

Im Frühling
Schwanengesang
Lachen und Weinen
An die Musik
Auflösung

Schubert

Allerseelen
Morgen
Befreit
Zueignung

Strauss

Dreams
A-oo (The Quest)
How Fair This Spot
What Wealth of Rapture

Rachmaninov

*Miss Plowright's dresses by
Elizabeth and David Emanuel.*

Programme Notes

TWO ITALIAN SONGS

L'Amor mio
La Gondoliera

Gaetano Donizetti
(1797-1848)

Donizetti was perhaps the most prolific of all the 19th century Italian composers — more than 60 operas and over two hundred known songs. *L'Amor mio* is one of 9 *Melodie Postume* published in Naples under the title *Fiori Di Sepolcri*. The text is by Felice Romani, the Italian poet and librettist who wrote over 100 texts for operas by Mayr, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, etc. *La Gondoliera* is a Barcarolle taken from *Matinée Musicale*, a collection of 6 songs, 2 duets and 2 quartets published in Naples in 1841 and dedicated to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

TWO ITALIAN SONGS

Storiella d'Amore
Sole e Amore

Giacomo Puccini
(1858-1924)

The 5th of a line of Italian church musicians, Puccini initially showed a bias towards symphonic works. His teacher at Milan Conservatory, Ponchielli, sensed his pupil's operatic potentiality and persuaded him to follow his own instinct. These two songs, of the dozen he wrote, were published between the appearance of his first two operas, *Le Villi* and *Edgar*. *Storiella d'Amore* is to a text by Antonio Ghislanzoni and first appeared in *Musica Popolare* in October 1883. *Sole e Amore*, a mattinata or morning song, is a setting of his own words and was published in the musical journal Paganini.

ITALIAN SONG

Romanza

Amilcare Ponchielli
(1834-1886)

Of Ponchielli's nine operas, only *La Gioconda* is remembered today, although *I Promessi Sposi* and *I Lituani* have enjoyed recent revivals in Italy. He was only nine years old when he was accepted as a student at the Milan Conservatory (where he later returned as a professor). Desperate, after the failure of his first three operas, he moved to Piacenza to conduct the band of the national guard and to provide music for municipal events. In addition he was able to eke out his meagre existence by composing occasional songs, such as this *Romanza*.

Interval

FOUR GERMAN LIEDER

Im Frühling D882
Schwanengesang Op. 23, No. 3
Lachen und Weinen Op. 59, No. 4, D777
An Die Musik D547
Auflösung D807

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Franz Schubert's Lieder, more than six hundred songs from a period of eighteen years, represent the greatest event in the history of song, not only because of their artistry, but also in regard to the development of the genre. While his literary taste has been much maligned, he chose with sure tact from among the poems produced by his own contemporaries. Brahms rightly said of him: 'There is not a song of Schubert's from which one cannot learn something!'

IM FRÜHLING
IN SPRING (Ernst Schulze)

In peace I rest on the brow of the hill —
The heaven is so clear;
The breezes sport in the green valley
Where I, at the first gleam of Spring,
Once (ah!) lived in such joy;
Where once I walked at her side
So trustful and so near,
And deep within the rocky spring
Saw the lovely heavens blue and bright,
Saw her within the heavens.
See! how the motley Spring peeps forth
From every bud and bloom!
Not all buds are alike to me:
My favourites would I pluck from the branch
From which she too has plucked.

For all remains as it was then,
The flowers and the field;
The sun shines no less bright,
With no less joy the blue of heaven
Sports in the welling spring.
All stands fixed but Desire and Illusion,
Joy now changes place with Strife;
Forth flees the happiness of Love:
Now only Love's sole self remains,
Love, and (ah!) Love's pain.
Oh, were I but a tiny bird,
There on the brow of the hill,
Then would I perch among these boughs
And sing the sweetest song of her
The whole summer long.

SCHWANENGESANG
SWANSONG (Johann Senn)

Lamentingly I express the imminence
of death,
Which pervades the limbs with sweet release.
I sing out loud, impelled by a feeling
of becoming
Which, redeeming me, wafts towards you,
O spirit.
He lamented, he sang,
Fearful of extinction,
Yearning for transfiguration,
Till life left him.
This is the meaning of the swan's last song.

LACHEN UND WEINEN
LAUGHING AND WEeping
(Friedrich Rückert)

Laughing and weeping again every hour
Dwells with love from such numberless
causes!

In the morning I laughed for joy —
And why I now weep
In the light of the evening,
I myself do not know.

Laughing and weeping again every hour
Dwells with love from such numberless
causes:

In the evening I cried for pain —
And how you can wake
In the morning with laughing,
I must ask you, O heart!

AN DIE MUSIK
TO MUSIC (Franz von Schober)

O art that I hold dear — how often, in hours
of gloom,
when life had caught me in its savage toils,
you have kindled warm love in my heart
and have borne me to a better world!
Often a sigh from your harp,
a sweet sacred chord from you,
gave me heavenly visions of happier times.
O dearest art — for all this I thank you.

AUFLÖSUNG
DISSOLUTION (Johann Mayrhofer)

Hide yourself, O sun,
For the burnings of delight
Scorch my body;
Fall silent, music;
Flee, O beauty of the Spring,
And let me be.

There stream forth from every corner
Of my soul delightful powers
Which embrace me,
Singing heavenly!
Away, O world!
Disturb no more
The sweet ethereal choirs!

FOUR GERMAN LIEDER

Allerseelen Op. 10, No. 8

Morgen Op. 27, No. 4

Befreit Op. 39, No. 4

Zueignung Op. 10, No. 1

Richard Strauss

(1864-1949)

Richard Strauss wrote more than two hundred songs. Most of them appeared in small volumes, twenty-six in all, each containing from three to eight songs, twelve of the volumes being devoted to the poems of a single author. The first complete edition of Strauss songs was published by Messrs. Boosey & Hawkes in 1964, the centenary year of the composer's birth. *Morgen* is from the volume dedicated as a wedding gift to Madame Pauline Strauss-deAhne in 1894. *Zueignung*, if not the first of Strauss' songs (he wrote a Christmas carol when he was six!) was the first to be published. Strauss was eighteen when he wrote it as one of a set of eight songs which he dedicated to the celebrated Wagnerian tenor Heinrich Vogl.

ALLERSEELEN

ALL SOULS' DAY (Hermann von Gilm)

Set on the board the mignonette all
fragrant,

The latest flowering asters bring here too,
Then let us speak again of love together,
As once in May.

Give me your hand, that secretly I may
press it,

And if we're seen, I do not greatly care,
Let but your dear eyes gaze awhile upon me,
As once in May.

Sweet blooms today on every grave are
flowering,

One day the year spares for departed souls;
Come to my heart, let me once more
possess thee,
As once in May.

MORGEN

TOMORROW (John Henry Mackay)

Tomorrow will the sun once more be
shining

And on the road that I shall journey over
He'll re-unite us two, who are blest by
Fortune,

Upon this sun-absorbing earth we inhabit.
And to the shore widespread, caressed by
blue waves,

We shall walk down in peaceful calm,
and slowly,

Gazing into each other's eyes quite
speechless,

A silence born of happiness upon us.

BEFREIT

RELEASED (Richard Dehmel)

O do not weep, love! Though I shall miss thee.
bid me farewell, love, and fondly kiss me.
and I'll return thy gaze and kiss.

Our sweet home in the woodlands, who but
thou didst adorn it?

I made it our world, our joy to own it;
o bliss!

Then shall thy soft snow-white hands
caress me.

thou shalt leave me thy soul and bless me;
leave me our babes with a mother's kiss.
Thou gav'st me thy life, thy love so tender,
both unto them I gladly render;
o bliss!

Life fast is ebbing; death comes tomorrow,
we both then shall be released from sorrow,
take now and give the farewell kiss.

Then I shall but see thee in dreams asleep,
love,

thou shalt bless me and with me shalt weep,
love,
o bliss!

ZUEIGNUNG

DEDICATION (Hermann von Gilm)

Yes, you know it, dear soul,
that, far from you, I pine;
love makes hearts sick —
be thanked!

Once, revelling in freedom, I lifted
up the amethyst cup
and you blessed the drink —
be thanked!

And you banish the evil spirits,
till I was, what I had never been,
holy, and holy fell on your heart;
be thanked!

FOUR RUSSIAN SONGS

Dreams Op. 38, No. 5

A-oo (The Quest) Op. 38, No. 6

How Fair This Spot Op. 21, No. 7

What Wealth of Rapture Op. 34, No. 12

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873-1943)

Composer pianist and conductor Rachmaninov was the last of the colourful Russian masters of the late 19th century with their characteristic gift for long and broad melodies imbued with a resigned melancholy which is never long absent. His operas have failed to hold the stage, mainly because of defects in their librettos, but records have enabled their splendid music to be appreciated. His songs, which are at last being recognised as among Russia's best, are distinguished, above all, by their subtlety of expression both in the vocal line and the piano accompaniment.

SON

DREAMS (F. Sologub)

Say, oh whither art bound,
Rare enchantment of dreams,
Wrapp'd with silence around,
Robed in mantle of gleams?
On their features may rise
Never laughter or pain,
Yet those glances shall prize
Wells of comfort serene.

Shining wings do they bear,
Far outspreading so light,
As they float thro' the air
In the shadowy night.
Tho' their pinions be still,
Yet they follow their quest,
Wander freely at will,
Soul and spirit at rest!

"AU!"

"A-OO" (The Quest) (K. Balmont)

Was it a dream? Thy voice, with
golden peals of laughter,
It called, like shepherds' pipes at early
day.
And in my songs I crowned thee ever
after.
Come, flee, my love, to mountains far
away.
But where art thou? The echo only
gives answer to my singing.
The flow'r is faded, and I know not
why.
And somewhere from the depths a
mocking voice is ringing.
In vain my quest: "A-oo! A-oo!" I cry.

"ZDES' KHOROSHO"

"HOW FAIR THIS SPOT" (G. Galina)

How fair this spot!
I gaze to where
The golden brook runs by.
The fields are all inlaid with flow'rs,
The white clouds sail on high.
No step draws near,
Such silence reigns,
Alone with God I seem;
With Him, and with the hoary pines,
And thee, my only dream!

"KAKOYE SCHAST'YE"

"WHAT WEALTH OF RAPTURE"

(A. Fet)

What wealth of rapture: 'tis night and
we alone!
The river smooth and calm, the myriad
stars reflecting.
Oh bend thee gently, bow thy head
towards the stream,
And mark within its deeps the blue of
Heav'n reflected!
Oh, tell me I have lost all reason!
Even madness
Name it! Yet my spirit trembles at this
moment,
By chains of magic love in servile
bondage held,
And I must cry aloud, no silence
understanding!
I suffer in my joy . . . Oh secret pain
of love,
Oh hear me and believe! if tears do
not betray me,
Then gladly I confess that I am thine
alone,
Alone, my heart's desires are bent on
thee for ever!



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